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SUBJECT: VISA WAIVER PROGRAM: ELECTRONIC SYSTEM FOR TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION (ESTA) OUTREACH BY MISSION JAPAN FOR JULY

Ref: A) STATE 78375 B) TOKYO 1711

[¶1.](#) SUMMARY: This cable contains information on outreach activities to inform the public of ESTA from June 20 to July 31. END SUMMARY.

[¶2.](#) Mission Japan consular and DHS representatives conducted a wide variety of outreach efforts to publicize the launch of ESTA. After drafting a power point presentation in Japanese and English containing ESTA application screen shots, Mission Japan personnel conducted the following outreach activities:

June 20: Consular officers at Embassy Tokyo met with internal customers from the Foreign Commercial Service and the Political and Economic sections to explain the program. These officers are now equipped to answer questions on ESTA.

June 26: Embassy conoff and DHS officers from ICE, CBP and TSA attended the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) Transportation and Logistics Subcommittee meeting and in an hour long briefing and Q and A session responded to their members' concerns. Attending the meeting were representatives from American, Continental, Northwest and United Airlines as well as other transportation companies. While they had a variety of questions on the implementation of ESTA, the main question from the airlines was

how they would find out in their systems that ESTA authorization was granted.

June 27: Embassy conoffs met with representatives from Keidanren, Keizai Douyukai and the U.S. Japan Business Council and gave a presentation on ESTA. These organizations are Japanese Chambers of Commerce for larger enterprises.

July 22: Osaka-Kobe conoffs hosted a 90-minute briefing on ESTA for 90 travel agents from 45 different travel agencies and business associations from the Kansai area. The purpose of the event was to familiarize travel agents with ESTA, encourage them to test the system during the August 1-January 11 voluntary trial period, and attempt to address any outstanding questions or concerns related to ESTA.

Consular Section Chief David Hillon gave welcoming remarks, both stressing the newness of ESTA and pledging the U.S. government's continued commitment to providing stakeholders with the latest information to better serve their clients. Conoffs also used the occasion to introduce incoming Osaka-Kobe Consul General Edward Dong, who, on his first day as the new consul general, welcomed the group and expressed Osaka-Kobe's support (for what?).

Vice Consul Gary Schaefer delivered the main briefing in Japanese using a 36-slide power point presentation and a copy of the 9/11 Commission Report. The presentation made use of the latest information on ESTA, including CBP ESTA website screen shots provided by Washington via Embassy Tokyo. Among the main topics covered were: the ESTA roll-out schedule; review of the web-based ESTA form; and steps in case of ESTA denial. Schaefer also stressed that ESTA was not a guarantee of admission into the U.S. and that admission would continue to be handled by DHS on a case-by-case basis at the port of entry.

Hillon, Schaefer, and NIV Chief Patrick Smeller were on hand for the Q&A session that followed the presentation. Most questions appeared to be related to the frequent travel of businesspeople to or through the U.S., especially as related to the 72-hour advance registration recommendation and the number of times an applicant may register.

As part of Osaka-Kobe conoffs' efforts to secure greater interagency cooperation, the Foreign Commercial Service participated in the event. Commercial Assistant Hirono Taki addressed the audience and distributed copies of "Discover America - USA Travel Guide," a colorful and information-packed Commerce Department publication promoting tourism in the U.S.

The audience made several useful suggestions, including providing ESTA updates and updated FAQs on our website. Osaka-Kobe conoffs already distribute information through its cooperative relationship with the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA), which has proven to be quite effective in reaching out to the travel agents in the consular district.

The following are examples of the questions received:

-- Do business travelers, who take frequent trips to the U.S. and often visit different cities, need to update their ESTA for each trip?

-- Someone registers through a travel agent, goes on a trip, and then travels again later using a different travel agent, which registers the traveler again. What happens to the original ESTA number?

-- How will airlines know if someone is or is not registered?

-- Can a traveler show up at the airport for a flight less than 72 hours after registering? How many hours before a flight can someone register?

-- Does it matter how many times you register?

-- What happens if a traveler doesn't remember when his or her ESTA expires? What if a traveler is registered by multiple agents?

-- What happens if erroneous information (e.g., passport number,

birth date, etc.) is entered? How can the information be updated? What happens if you enter an incorrect passport number or DOB and you don't discover it until less than 72 hours before the flight? What should you do?

-- Is there any difference between individuals registering themselves and travel agents doing it? Can travelers see who registered for them? Currently, the DS-156 form has an area that shows if a travel agent prepared the application (questions 39 and 40 on page two). Will ESTA have the same system?

-- What happens if someone suddenly cancels a trip after registering with ESTA?

-- How should someone transiting through the U.S. (e.g., on the way to and from Mexico) register with ESTA? Should it be done twice? What kind of information should be included?

July 23: The Tokyo Consul General and the DHS Senior Representative met with the American State Offices Association (ASOA) to brief members on ESTA. Representatives from the state offices of Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia attended. Foreign Commercial Service representatives were also present. The questions asked were:

-- Does ESTA apply to transit travel?

-- Does it provide for emergency last minute travel?

-- Do you have to go back into the system if you change your itinerary?

July 29: The Tokyo Visa Branch Chief and a CBP Assistant Attaché held two ESTA seminars in the Embassy Tokyo auditorium with simultaneous Japanese and English power point presentations containing ESTA application screen shots for a total of 351 participants. Attendees were mainly from airlines (29) and travel agencies (316). There were some Ministry of Foreign Affairs and travel magazine journalist participants as well. The presentations were well received and the ESTA application screen shots with Japanese translations were given to the participants as handouts. Below are some of the questions that were asked:

-- Will the system issue an authorization with the expiration date?

-- We understand that multiple trips are permitted during an ESTA authorization, and that the authorization is valid for two years. What if an itinerary is JAPAN-SAN FRANCISCO-BRAZIL-CHICAGO-JAPAN, or multiple cities in the U.S.? Do I need to update ESTA? Do I need to apply for ESTA each time if my destinations are different?

-- (1) Is it possible to change the ESTA information less than 72 hours before the flight? (2) Do I need to submit an I-94W even if I have obtained ESTA? (3) What if my family name has changed after I obtained ESTA? Should I reapply for ESTA? If so, what happens to the previous ESTA, e.g. will it be deleted, or will it still remain in the system?

-- Any possibilities for: (1) applying by means other than internet?; (2) applying less than 72 hours?; (3) travel from a third country such as Brazil or Canada?

-- If I update ESTA, will it extend the expiration date? What if I already have a transit visa?

-- (1) The Australian Embassy accepts inquiries by telephone for those who are denied ETA because his or her name is exactly matched with a criminal record. Is the U.S. Embassy going to have such a service? (2) Do children and infants also need to apply for ESTA? (3) If destination and/or arrival dates change after the traveler has obtained ESTA, should he or she reapply or update? (4) Do travelers still need to submit an I-94W? (5) Do Official Passport holders who don't have visas and transit the U.S. need ESTA? (6) What if my ESTA expires while staying in the U.S.?

-- What if a visa holder comes back to Japan and goes to the U.S.

for a different purpose (e.g. an E-visa holder goes to the U.S. for tourism)? Does he need to apply for ESTA? (2) Do I need to void a previously issued ESTA when I have to update the information?

-- Do people need to fill out an I-94W even during the optional period? People might think that they don't need to fill out an I-94W. Do you inform travelers about that on the web?

-- Can we check if our clients already have an ESTA? Can we print out of an authorization page?

-- Do you have any specific form for travel agents to use to obtain ESTA information from their clients?

-- Can third parties update ESTA info?

-- Can travel agents apply for ESTA on behalf of customers?

-- What should we do about travelers who need to travel urgently, within 72 hours of the flight?

-- What procedures should be followed for handling emergency travelers at an airport check-in counter?

-- Under ESTA will you use the same criteria currently used to authorize entry into the U.S.?

-- Will travelers be unable to board a plane without ESTA as of January 12?

-- Will you work with the carriers to have a system in place so that the carrier can check ESTA at check-in?

-- Will the airlines be able to ask for authorization at check-in?

-- When will the I-94W cease to be used?

-- If you forget you have registered for ESTA, what do you do?

-- If I got ESTA approval but put in the wrong name and DOB and I get to the POE and the inspector sees that the information doesn't match the information in my passport, will my inspection take longer? Will I be taken to secondary?

¶2. Mission Japan continues to work as a team to conduct outreach on ESTA and has plans for further events in the coming weeks. Our next initiative will be a survey of travel agents and their experience in using ESTA.

SCHIEFFER